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By ARM/JAC Date 7/6/2004

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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006

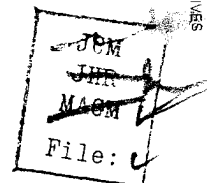
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EMBASSY OF THE
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Tehran, Iran



NOV - 7 1972

October 30, 1972

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OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Jack C. Miklos, Esquire
NEA/IRN
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Jack:

Many thanks for your letter of October 18 commenting on our pre-election report -- it's good to know that someone reads and thinks about the stuff we send in.

A few more remarks on my part might be in order though, as I would like to give you some idea of the thinking which led to our A-166 and especially to the final sentence in the commentary.

First of all, the question of a functioning party system and electoral process in Iran is tightly woven into the complex problem of a smooth non-violent transition from an absolute monarchy to a working constitutional one; a social process which is far too involved for the confines of this letter, but which will form the subject of a future think piece. Viewing, insofar as is possible, the question of parties and elections out of the above context, I would agree with you that "form without content doesn't spell institution building in our book" but the Shah is not writing our book -- the volume he is compiling is very definitely his own. He and his officials appear to believe sincerely that they can create democratic forms, that the use of these forms will have an educational effect on a sizable segment of the populace, and that the forms can later be inflated with substance at a time of the Shah's choosing and in a way which will allow of manageable results. Of course, this is a delicate operation and the inflated form-balloon could burst in the imperial face. Moreover,

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fear of just such an explosion might eventually prevent HIM from adding content to democratic appearances. But even in their insubstantial state, Iran's democratic forms serve a purpose; they aid the Shah in impressing the foreign audience to which he so often plays.

Of course we agree, and we so stated in our airgram, that both the politicians and the people perceive their electoral process accurately and consequently regard it with cynicism and apathy. But we find it very interesting that, after years of meek acceptance of tight election controls, there is suddenly a flap among the very politicians whose close acquaintance with Iranian elections leaves them with no illusions as to its true nature.

There are at least two reasons for the flap and both of them appear to stem from the influence and actions of dismissed Mardom Party Secretary-General Ali Naqi Kani. In the first instance, Mardom, being a traditional Iranian political party, is made up of cliques of followers of a few competing leaders who cooperate with one another for personal and pragmatic reasons but not out of any sense of party unity. Kani's methods had made a number of enemies and with his fall his supporters could expect to suffer. Under these circumstances, a clash within the party is perfectly natural and much of what surfaced as committee resignations and intemperate remarks is probably nothing more than the visible portion of various personal power struggles.

But this accounts for only a part of the problem. Most of the attacks on Adl have been voiced not in terms of who gets what job; rather they have been focused in the main on questions of collusion between the two parties, lackluster campaigning, refusal to field candidates in certain elections and other activities which have characterized Mardom campaigns in the past. It seems to us that this dissatisfaction with a return to past policies is almost entirely the result of Kani's stint in office. He appeared to believe that he could become Prime Minister by making Mardom into an effective opposition party. He was wrong, but in the course of his eighteen month error he conducted what was for Iran a slashing, almost frenetic assault on Iran Novin's administration of the government and, to a lesser extent, on government politics. His tactics

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appealed to the broad argumentative streak which runs deep in the Persian people and may have awakened memories within them of Iranian political parties as they used to be. We said that this was tentative but we continue to believe that included in Kani's legacy was a feeling among his closer followers that an opposition party can and should be a meaningful political vehicle and a sense of dismay when they saw what they considered opportunities for change (as well as personal aggrandizement) sidetracked by Adl.

This is the thinking that led up to our tentative statement that the resignations appear to indicate a belief among those who resigned in the need for a true opposition party. We recognize that the belief may not last, in fact with Kani gone it would be surprising if it did. Moreover, there are some vague signs that the Shah may be toying with the idea of letting Mardom wither away and opting for a one-party system.

In any case we find the Mardom flareup interesting -- even more so if our interpretation is correct because it is precisely the kind of reaction which we would not have predicted.

Regards,

Sincerely,

Andy Killgore

Andrew I. Killgore

P.S. - Joe, your letter was particularly welcome because of the strong criticism of the Iranian regime implied in it. The Shah is a great man whose accomplishments are also great. But this gives no occasion for a war.

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shipful attitude on our part. The Shah's interests and ours will be better served in the long run by our looking dispassionately at the failures as well as the successes of the regime. That's what we are going to be doing.
Cheers! Andrew K